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THE QUEBEC GAZETTE.

(The following brief History of this paper written by the late Mr. SAMUEL NEILSON the then proprietor, in 1796, it is thought will not be unacceptable to the public in the present moment.)

"WILLIAM BROWN & THOMAS GILMORE, both natives of Great Britain, first introduced the art of printing into Canada; and in 1764 began the weekly publication of THE QUEBEC GAZETTE, then comprised in a sheet of Crown paper, in the French and English languages, containing the most material public occurrences in Europe and America."

"In the first Gazette was an exposition of the principles upon which it was to be conducted, in which, after stating the accuracy freedom and impartiality it was meant to attempt in the compilation it declared to have nothing so much at heart as the support of virtue, morality and the noble cause of Liberty, and that it was intended to blend Philosophy, History, Politics &c. in the publication, at the same time pledging itself to the public that party prejudices or private scandal should never stain its page."

"The original number of subscribers appears to have been about 150 of which about half were English and half French. The Gazette continued, with little fluctuation in the number of purchasers, till a stamp duty imposed by Great Britain on her Colonies put a stop to the publication in October 1765. That duty being repealed the Gazette was again renewed in 1766, with about the same number of subscribers.(1)

"It was again interrupted in November 1775 by the Anglo-Americans laying siege to Quebec on separating themselves from Great Britain.(2)

"On the siege being raised in May 1776, William Brown, (Thomas Gilmore having died in 1772) endeavoured to re-establish the Gazette, but was, at first, prevented by the then Governor Guy Carleton, who was apparently averse to the publication of a newspaper in the Province from what motives it is unknown; but it could proceed from no *disloyalty* on the part of Mr. Brown who remained in the Town during the siege and defended it along with his fellow Citizens. However after much low and courtly condescension in August 1776, Mr. Brown was permitted to make a second ressurection of the Quebec Gazette; but under the most servile professions to the public. Before this time he had obtained a commission of King's Printer, and his Salary of £50 was augmented to £100 Stg.

"During the whole of the American War 1775 to 1783, the Gazette kept silence on the most important facts, and was filled with misrepresentations. During General Bourgogne's operations on the frontiers of this province, not a word was publish respecting them; and although his defeat was publickly known at Quebec, a few weeks after it happened, not the least account of it was published till nearly two years afterwards.

"After the return of peace the influence of habitual servility and perhaps the £100 Salary, rendered the Gazette if not as false at least as insipid as before. A period of peace also served to retain the calm.

"William Brown died in March 1789, at which time the subscribers to the Gazette were not more than 290, what is less than two thirds of the present number (in 1792.)

"The Gazette was continued by his Nephew and Successor, the salary and commission withdrawn, and he was thereby left without a motive to publish falsehoods or conceal truth; besides he only retained the printing for Government, because none could be found to do it cheaper or so well, although there were then two other Printers established at Quebec."

"It will belong to a future successor to say whether the Quebec Gazette, from 1789 was dedicated to a particular or general interest, whether not conducted with freedom, truth, impartiality and justice to the community in which it circulated.

"Quebec, 1st June. 1792."

[The writer died in January 1793. In his last will or testament he bequeathed the Quebec Gazette to his Brother John Neilson, then a minor, after which it was conducted till he was of age by the late Rev. Dr. Spark, his Guardian.]

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(1) On this occasion the first paper [May 29th 1766] contained the following:—

"A report having been raised, and industriously propagated, that our Gazette was *under the Inspection* of the Secretary, therefore, in Order to prevent any Detriment it might be of to us, we think it necessary to declare, that ever since the Establishment of Civil Government, our Paper has been, and ever shall be, as free from the Inspection or Restrictions of any Person whatsoever, as it is of the late *Stamps*, and that the said Report was premature and highly ungenerous. We protest'd at our first setting out, our avow'd Resolution against making our Publication the Conveyance of private Scandal, or the Tool and Stimulator to political Faction; we trust that from Principle we should keep to this, though Regard to our own Safety did not oblige us to it. At the same Time we never mean to refuse, nor have refused, a Place in our Paper to any Thing which might or has been offered to us, which, free from these Tendencies, might contribute to amuse, to entertain, or to instruct.—It is a happiness peculiar to the Subjects of the British Empire only, to have the liberty of thinking for themselves on all Subjects, to speak what they think, and to publish, such Thoughts as may seem innoxious to Individuals, and undisturbing to the Public. It is therefore from the British Press only, that Publications can come without an *Imprimatur*; a most valuable Liberty in itself, and by the wisest of our Politicans and the greatest of our Writers, has been asserted to be the great Support of every other Liberty besides."

(2) "Till the commencement of the War between Great Britain and the Colonies. "The Gazette had been a faithful narrator of the circumstances which led to the unfortunate crisis, but all communication being broke up and through other more powerful causes the same soon changed."